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A Coward for Beauty

HELEN PAFFORD



HE leaping red flames from the oak logs had wilted and only the soft, glowing ashes remained. Haden, head of the East Indian Archaeological Bureau, sat in a richly upholstered chair in a Calcutta hotel, with his legs stretched out almost into the fire. He flicked another cigarette, the last of the new package, and watched it mingle with the other ashes.

"So you've seen her recently. Tell me about her."

"Oh, you're still interested, you mean?" His companion with the heavily shaded grey eyes asked, as she raised an eyebrow. "Really, one would hardly expect **you** to have remembered her name."

"Oh, you don't understand, of course," he said with the indifference of one having learned to get along without the understanding of others.

"For a long time I tried to find someone who would. But—no one ever did," he added almost lightly. "In fact, so many people told me I was a brute that I decided I would become one just to keep the reputation." And his laugh was filled with the bitterness of twenty long years away from anyone he had ever loved—twenty years of suffering which no one seemed able to comprehend.

"And you of course expected everyone to sympathize with you," and the low voice of the well-dressed middle aged lady in the near-by chair overflowed with contempt. "You expected everyone to tell you how fine and noble it was of you to leave my sister—the girl who loved you better than life, simply because her face was disfigured in an accident and some of her beauty was lost—".

There was a long silence during which Haden seemed to lose himself in thought as he gazed into the glowing ashes. That accident. It had changed, the one person that had ever approached his ideal, to the one

thing that aroused cowardice in him—ugliness. It had stolen from him the one woman in his life who had satisfied both his love of beauty, of body and soul. It had given in return an intense hatred of himself. He

A PESSIMIST'S RAIN SONG

(With apologies to Loveman)

*It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining aches and ills.
In every sparkling drop I see
Just stacks of doctor's bills.
The clouds of gray engulf the day
And overwhelm the town;
It isn't raining rain to me
It's raining trouble down.*

*It isn't raining rain to me
It's raining holes and tears,
And every blessed thing I own
Is calling for repairs.
All too soon the dining room
Will call me not to shirk;
It isn't raining rain to me
It's raining work, work, work.*

*It isn't raining rain to me
It's raining soup and pie,
And every time I see an egg
Great Caesar! I could die!
Tray after tray I take away
From Rozar's Paradise.
It isn't raining rain to me;
It's raining rice, rice, rice.*

Sarah Hammons.

knew they had been right years ago when they had said he was cruel, when they had called him coward, when they had sneered as he stood on a hill at evening and smiled as the first timid star came to life. But to know that he was cruel, that he was a coward, that his love of the beautiful had filled two lives with ugliness; all this only intensified his self-hatred. He, who all his life had rebelled against the ugly and leaned toward the beautiful, had been forced to choose between this love and this hate, which were so nearly the same. And hate had won.

Having lost, the love had re-

vengeed itself by showing him the hopeless lack of anything noble or beautiful in his own character. Having lost, it never let him forget just exactly how much he himself missed from having chosen the other way. So that now when he spoke, all the bitterness was gone, leaving a man pitifully unable to explain himself.

"Please—can't you see? Can't anyone understand that she was life to me? That I haven't lived since that day in the hospital? Can't you feel what I felt? Just to know that her lovely slender fingers—her hair—her face—you must see that I couldn't make her happy." And he pleadingly lifted dark eyes from which a screen had been lifted, showing for the first time in years, that the man had a living, burning soul within.

"I see that you didn't. That you loved her beauty, not what she really was," she murmured, unmoved. He turned his head to look at her closely. That voice—tender, low, almost a melody in itself. He had never believed that any other woman could have the same delicate shading of vocal intonations. Still, they **were** sisters.

"No, it wasn't only her beauty I loved," he sighed wearily as he thought of the calm peacefulness that used to come over him when they sat by the bay, watching the sails silhouetted against a darkening, reddening sky. "If it had been nothing more, don't you see that I wouldn't have kept on like this for twenty years, worshipping the very thought of her, yet knowing she was a hideous creature?"

She flinched suddenly, but, seeming not to notice, he went on, now in a monotonously droning murmur.

"I can't help it. I've always been that way. When I was a boy I would clench my eyes shut whenever I saw a cripple. When I see any physical deformity something just rises up in me and I feel that I will push

my teeth out from clinching them together. Or even strike the person if they don't get out of my sight. You don't understand, so you can't know that I've suffered.—Yes, I've paid for it," he said as he looked up to see the sneer on her face, a face strangely hardened yet with surprisingly few lines.

"After the accident, you must know that I scoured the country begging for a surgeon who could restore what had been taken from her. I tried—God knows I did—I tried to overcome the feeling. I visited hospitals, the most hopeless wards. But it didn't help. Nothing did. And then when they said she was hopelessly scarred—I left, and came here.

"Can't you see," he begged as he sat forward from where he had gradually slumped in the chair, "it would have hurt her even more to have had to watch me and see that I could hardly touch her. She wouldn't have understood. Just as you don't. She would have been miserable. And as it was, she could learn to hate me and get over it for that reason."

"Oh, you know so little," and a strained smile played around her mouth. She turned her head and faced him for the first time. "She couldn't hate you, because she believed in you. She thought you had a reason and that you would come back. And then when you didn't come back—your family, no one ever heard of you—she believed you must have failed in what you were attempting and she wanted to find you and tell you that—she was interested. And so, she sent me here to find out more about you and to tell you that—she isn't a hideous creature," and she lowered her eyes before his intense gaze.

"Why, what do you mean?"

"Partly that the doctors to some degree were mistaken as to the seriousness of the injury. And then you know that was twenty years ago. Surgery has improved. There was money you know, and she spent it with surgeons who grafted skin and practically hid the scars you detest so thoroughly." The contempt came again into her voice.

"You mean they removed them," he almost whispered unbelievably. He gazed steadily into the flames

that flared up from another empty cigarette package. "And I believed them when they said they couldn't."

For several minutes he stared before him, while she looked at the back of his head and two or three times started up as if to touch his bent shoulder, but thought better of it and sat stiffly in her chair.

"Where is she?" His question sounded hard and cold as it broke a sullen, still silence.

"She—why there's no need to tell you. You—"

"But she loves me?" He asked in amazement.

"O I don't know—I don't know. How can you ask after I've told you all she's done," she almost wailed.

"But if she loves me—she wants me to come to her—she—"

"O you're cruel. So very cruel." She shook her graying brown head slowly. Suddenly she came to life as though she would heap on him curses for all he had ever done.

"No, she would not see you. Ever. I think she would want me to tell you not to ever try to find her—not to torture her more by the thought of you. And now that you know," she added softly, "you may go."

Yet somehow, even as this woman told him he must never see her sister again, there came to him a picture of her as he had loved her. Something in this woman's movements reminded him of how he used to be completely happy just watching her walk across the room—a perfection of rhythmic motion. The smooth, easy manner in which she

slipped on her coat after the opera was such a lovely sight—such a delightful contrast to the hurried jerks of most women.

"But to know that she loves me—that she isn't ugly," he argued as he rose from the chair and leaned on the mantel, "—and I can't see her."

"So you really could look at her you think—perhaps even touch her gloved fingers, well, perhaps so. But you won't," she looked into his eyes as she clinched her own carefully gloved hands. "Oh no, you'll never see her again. She loves you—yes, perhaps at times, and being a woman she might love you—but, it is for what you once were, what you meant to her—and not for what you have proved yourself to be. You say you've suffered. Well, now you may suffer as she did—only worse because there's no hope for you. And she could at least hope that you would come back.

"She only wanted you to know that she is happy. And now—please go," she added wearily, as she could think of no other excuse for having come.

Her eyes pleaded with him to leave her. He stood by the fire with his hand on the mantel staring at the floor. He had hardened himself to live his life without her, to live for his work in the excavation fields, to give it the place in his life which she would have had. But now he was forced to remember that he had a heart and that there was a place in it which nothing in this foreign land had ever filled. And now after seeing her sister and hearing the cruel, stinging words again, he realized that for him his heart would remain gray and lifeless as the ashes at his feet.

"Yes, I'll go." But his voice was dead. "But when you see her, tell her that—I love her—and I need her. I always shall."

Without looking at his visitor again, he walked slowly from the room, leaving her looking after him, still as a statue.

"O God! What have I done?" She muttered.

He had believed her. He could go on, but could she, knowing what she did now? Perhaps after all, she was the weaker one.

*The sunlight, a panther
Sleek, tawny of hue
Slipped knife blades
Of gold twixt the shadowy trees.
Shadows and gold—
Dark and light liquor
Poured in a pattern for me and you.*

*My scene is monotonous,
The trees are there, yes
The leaves still quite gaudy and radiant
too
The pines mold a background
Blown gold on their feet.
No radiance pours downward—
I grasp you, afraid.*

Helen Jones.

The Telegram

ROSE PEAGLER



THROUGH the unnoticed splendor of the Northern fall evening, Tom Bacon watched the beauty of his wife's legs as they ran back and forth across his room.

For two weeks he had watched every movement Nora Bacon made from the time she entered his doorway until those grudging moments when she was away from him briefly. He watched her and hated her all day long. Tom's jealousy of Nora which had played such a great part in his love for her always, had now become mania.

For two weeks, Tom Bacon had been confined to his room. Ever since the lumber-mill accident when the huge tree had fallen too quickly and they had brought him home—without any legs.

On this fall evening, he sat propped by pillows in a wheel chair, covered to his waist with a bright patchwork quilt—a stump of a man in body and soul—hating his beautiful wife Nora—and in his terrible way almost loving her.

He saw her come toward him now with an armful of riotous leaves.

"Tom, darling, aren't they splendid? Baxter sent them. He had a call 'way out in the country this afternoon."

Then irrelevantly—"He had to go to Alma for the night."

Tom's eyes and throat burned.

"Yes, yes, put them there."

So she had seen Baxter again? Baxter who had loved her before she married Tom. Baxter who was wasting his perfect body on being a doctor. The place for perfect bodies was in the forest with the tall Northern trees sending out their fragrance to men in lumberjacks. That was where Tom had been—in the clean vastness of his forest. That was where his soul was now, crushed beneath a fallen tree. And Baxter sent his wife fall leaves.

Nora dropped on her knees and took his hands in hers. It was a moment before he noticed her.

"Tom, my darling, I can't bear to have you so miserable. I haven't spoken of this to you since that first day, but you must see, Tom, dear, that I would give my life to change it all. But it can't be. We must face

PATIENCE UNREWARDED

*Love, I am knocking once again
Upon the fortress of your heart.*

I've knocked one hundred times before;

*I know I'll knock one hundred more.
I know once more, in proud disdain,
I'll turn to go; I know I'll start—*

*But, true to form, love, you'll look then
And smile and call me back, though
mocking;*

*And back I'll crawl, just as you
sensed,*

Although each time I'm quite convinced

*You want me—not to let me in—
You like to hear me knocking.*

Hazel Birch.

it—together. I love you so very much. You're my husband. Tom, Tom, don't you see, dear, that it isn't **pity** that is making me say this. It's because I love you—you know—as I always have—with all my heart! We can manage. I can go back to painting again. You can get work to do here at home. After awhile maybe it won't hurt as terribly. Won't you try? We still have each other. That's all that can ever matter. Tom, you haven't kissed me in so long. Please kiss me now."

He kissed her lightly—with restraint. No more would she ever be his. She, so lovely, so desirable, must seem desirable to others too—to Baxter. Even now Baxter still

must love and want her. One couldn't stop wanting Nora. Nora was meant for a strong man. In her young humanness, she must realize this. Couldn't these words she spoke be for simple comfort—as one might use to a child? Of course they could be—of course they must be—of course they were! No one realized her simple needs and desires as Nora herself would. Even now she must be comparing him with piteous contempt to Baxter. She must want her freedom with all her heart—and since that freedom could only be obtained under the most unfavorable circumstances—she must cherish her love for Baxter secretly in her heart. Perhaps she met him in her short occasional visits from the invalid's room! Tom could imagine their hurried, stolen, minutes. They would be so careful that he not know of them. They wouldn't want to hurt him. No, they wouldn't hurt him—just leave him to die in his own little carefully-guarded hell—his hell of misery, suspicions; with his terrible sense of loss and profound jealousy. No, they wouldn't hurt him. They'd never tell him of their love. Nora would remain married to him—to comfort him—as she might comfort a child. He would take the place of the child she had wanted—the child which would have been theirs together! And she would go on loving and meeting Baxter while he—

"Tom"—Nora broke into his thoughts with anxious voice at the look on his face.

"Put the leaves in that jug in the hall, and bring it here," he said flatly.

His wife rose with a sigh, and turned her face towards the wall. She carried the leaves tightly in her arms.

Tom watched her leave as he had done so many times a day—with wild, brilliant eyes. Soon perhaps she would go to meet the other man.

He slammed his fist against the chairside. He could stand the suspense no longer. He had to know now! He had to know!

He seized the telephone from the table at his elbow. A strained voice whispered from his lips.

"Western Union." "Take this telegram to be delivered to Mrs. Tom Bacon—212 East Street—City—immediately. 'Must meet you at once the usual place love Baxter.' Just that—yes—yes—to Tom Bacon—yes, Tom Bacon. At once."

Soon Nora came back and sat by the window. Tom watched her steadily, and she grew more nervous.

Only a few moments now stood between him and certainty. Presently the telegram signed with Baxter's name would be delivered. He had no time to think what would happen if such a message meant nothing to Nora; his mind was shot through with overpowering fear that it would mean much to her.

He gripped the arms of his chair and leaned forward, breathing heavily, with his brilliant eyes on his wife's pale face. She breathed heavily, too, and instinctively slowly leaned forward. . . .

The tension in the air was broken by a loud ring of the front doorbell.

Nora sprang to answer it—as if fleeing from an awful presence. She came back with blanched face.

Her husband's thoughts all stopped—suspended on her answer.

"Tom, darling, my mother—she is very ill—They have sent for me. I must go at once. Mamie will take care of you until I get back. I—I'm afraid it's serious."

She left the room quickly. Tom stared at the door without moving. A numbness held his person. So it had happened—as he feared it would. She loved Baxter. Ah, God—she loved Baxter! And what beat through his being with greater force—she lied to him! Had lied to him all along. He saw it all now—the trip before to her sick mother—all those visits "to the library to get a book." The daily purchase of groceries took on extreme importance. Those queer expressions that often came over her face—they had been

propounding the awful thing she lived! The wistfulness had not been anxiety and fear for him at all—but stifled longing to be away from him—with someone else. Sickness flooded through him, and he rocked with misery. He had been a blind fool. She had lied to him all along, and laughed at him behind his back! And she met Baxter! Loved him. Was going to him now—

Nora reentered the room with a small bag.

She was going to him now. Leaving the deformed, miserable man who was only her husband for that other man, who was her lover. He imagined her face lighting for Baxter as it had once done for him. She would hold out her shapely arms to him, gaily. He would laugh and hold her—Tom's wife—and kiss her lovely lips—her eyelids—her round, ivory, sweet throat. Somehow he felt that that was more than any human could stand! His eyes were focused there. Baxter's kiss—Baxter—Baxter—

O SEA!

*O sea! When shall we ever know
The secrets of your deeps below;
Unfathomed lairs in brine and weed
Where iridescent fishes feed;
Where stately ships in slimy shroud
Lie still below, where once so proud
They rode?*

*In thy green waters sink to rest
The brave and true who rode thy crest.
Thy bosom swells; the sea-gulls cry;
Thy surges moan for those who die;
Yet you hold close in your embrace,
The fair and lovely of the race,
Unchallenged!*

*And yet, O sea, you often wear
A garment made of soft sweet air,
And glistening sunshine warm and bright,
Or shimmering gleams of moonlit night.
Sometime, on rocks your wavelets break;
And oft the sands your bright shells take
For children.*

Banks Armand.

Then he did a strange thing. Tom Bacon laughed, and said to his astonished wife, "Aren't you going to kiss your husband goodbye?"

"Oh, Tom—of course I am—"

She rushed to him and threw her arms about his neck.

Two cold hands, calm with madness, caught her throat. There was no passion in the man's expressionless face. The dull eyes never flickered.

. . . . Something slipped to the floor.

Even in death she flaunted the dread comparison at him. A lifeless hand with an ironical gold band had dragged the quilt from him—shaming him.

He watched her critically. Death did not break habits immediately. Baxter would not recognize her by her face—or throat. Of course the body was the same. Only without life. Nora without life! Somehow that seemed impossible. Nora had so much life. She took care of him, and loved him; no, she loved Baxter. That was why he had killed her. Because she loved Baxter—or because she lied to him. He couldn't be sure. Perhaps it was because he loved her. Of course there had never been another. He wanted her so—but now he could never have her, because she loved Baxter—No, because she was dead. Because he had killed her! He had killed her—he—Tom Bacon—but he was her husband! He loved her! Remember—to love and cherish—'til death us do part? 'Til death—. But it hadn't meant this. No, no, it couldn't. Not this for Nora—now. No, God, she is too young to die—too young and beautiful And he loved her—But he had killed her! But he couldn't have—he couldn't have—he loved her! Everything was whirling and throbbing in his head—if only he could get things straight.

Then he saw the telegram in his wife's hand. He leaned over and took it. The yellow page bore these words; "Mother very ill come at once Kay."

When at last he raised his ghastly gaze to the open window, he saw a Western Union boy run across the lawn towards his house.

The Sin of Obscene

NINA TABOR

Time:—The Summer.

Place:—A southern farm.

Characters:—Obscene Vettters, Miranda Vettters, Charley Roberts, Parson Moses Johnson.

Scene:—The kitchen of the Vettters' home. At the back left is a door which leads into the back yard. At center back is a lighted stove on which there are two irons. An ironing board is placed on top of a table at center right. At left front are some shelves on which the dishes are kept. In the left center wall is a door that leads into the front part of the house. The cooking utensils are hanging on the wall at right back. Two or three straight-backed, cane-bottomed chairs are scattered around the room.

Scene I:—The scene is in the kitchen of a negro household. The mother, Miranda Vettters, is ironing, while Obscene, her young son, is sitting nearby studying.

Obscene (reading aloud):—"Baby Roy has some sheep. How many sheep does Baby Roy have? Baby Roy has s-e-v-e-n, what do dat spell, maw?"

Miranda:—"Dat is sebben. You know: one, two, free, fo', five, six, **sebben**." (Holding up a print dress) "Dis sho is a purty dress. Wonder whar Mis' Jones got it."

Obscene:—" . . . sebben sheep: Say, has you seen dose watermelons down in Mistuh Jones' patch? They sho' are pretty; bet they're good'n ripe, too. Reckon he'd give me one ef I wuz to hoe his yard fer 'im?"

Miranda:—"Now, Obscene, you know as well as I do dat you got to git up yo' lessons, and den yo' paw tole you to hoe his peas out."

Obscene:—"But maw, I kin hoe de peas out tomorrow, 'n me 'n Charley wuz all set fer to eat a big watermelon tonight when he comes to

see me. Please maw, can't I ask him fer one?"

Miranda (angrily):—"No, git on wid yo' lessons; you got to git dem, den you got to hoe dem peas out 'fore sundown, or yo' paw'll tan yo' hide."

Obscene (looking out back door):



—"Yonder's Charley now, 'n I've got my lessons. Honest maw, dat's all de teacher tole us to do."

(To Charley who is coming in the door) "C'm in Charley; maw says us can't hoe out Mistuh Joneses' patch fer a watermelon."

Charley:—"Please do, Miss Miranda; maw tole me I could. Tell you what; I'll help Obscene hoe de peas, if you'll let we'uns hoe Mistuh Joneses' yard."

Miranda:—"Ef you'se two chil-luns don't git out uv hyar, I'll hoe you. Hyar I yam all ready a day late wid Mrs. Joneses' clothes on account uv de rain Monday, 'n I got mo' work to do dan I can do in a coon's age. Go on, git out uv here 'n play—'n I'd better not see, or hear tell uv you two up to any divilment."

Charley (dejectedly):—"C'm on, Obscene. Guess we'll have to jist play like we has a watermelon."

Silence for a minute, then "Say, I tell you what let's do. . . ."

(They go out, and Miranda begins to sing "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" in a high-pitched voice).

Scene II:—Miranda puts up her ironing board, then gives a sigh of relief. She goes to the back door, looks out, and suddenly:

Miranda:—"Ob-scene, you'n Charley come hyar dis minit."

(Obscene and Charley enter, carrying a large, apparently heavy, box).

Miranda:—"Why you all sneakin' 'round de cornah uv dis house? What you got in dat box?"

Obscene:—"It ain't nuthin' but jist rocks. En, we wuz guine to build a house widdem."

Miranda:—"You say dare ain't nuthin' but rocks in dat box? Humm. . . 'Pears to me dat you are mighty pertickler wid dem. I'll jist take a look at dem **rocks**."

(The boys reluctantly hand the box to her; she opens it).

Miranda:—"Hi Yi! Do you tink I'se bline? I calls dat a plain watermilon, and I know whar you got it. You all done 'n went over to Mistuh Joneses' patch and **stole** it, you rascals, you **stole** it. (wringing hands) Oh, to think dat a chile ob mine would stoop to de depths of sin, 'n be sich a sarvant ob de divil dat he would steal. Whut do you rickon Saint Peter'll do when you goes to de gold'n gate and 'plies fer admission?"

Obscene:—"I, I don't know."

Miranda:—"He'll say:—'Boy, you dis'beyed de Lawd in de most extremest, pow'fullest sin you could hab; you **stole**. So you go'n walk on de fiery coals ob Hades 'til judg'ment day.' 'N do you know whut de holy 'cordion angel done writ in his book?"

Obscene and Charley (eyes round with fright):—"No'h—what?"

Miranda:—"Stolen by Obscene Vettters and Charley Roberts, one round watermelon.' 'N whut do you suppose Brother Johnson'd think ob you stealin'? **My boy**, stealing. And me president ob de Woman's Missionary Sassiety, and Chairman ob de Committee uv de Sons and Daughters ob I Will Arise. Oh, what will people think."

Obscene (crying):—"Maw, I didn't know dat I was sinnin' so bad. Do you rickin' ef I'd take de watermilon back 'n go to preachin' de rest ob de year dat I'd be fo-giv'n?"

Miranda:—"You kin try de preachin' part, but I suppose'n as how you has already cut de watermilon offe'rn hit's vine and brung it ovah hyar, we might as well eat it. Git me a knife."

(She cuts the watermelon).

Miranda:—"It's **green!** Obscene, don't **you** know when a watermilon is ripe? Well, effe'n you don't I'll proceed to tell you rat now. You thumps it, 'n when it goes "pink" it's green, but when it goes "punk" boy, dat watermilon done ready to eat. And Obscene, you——, next time you gets a watermilon 'n hit goes "pink", I'se guine lam dat black hide ob yore'n 'til dare ain't a greasy spot left."

(Obscene and Charley look up at Miranda, who glares fiercely at them. They squirm around and look at each other. Then—).

Charley:—"I—I rickon I'd better go home."

Obscene (eagerly):—"N I'll walk piece ob de way wid you, for hit's about dark."

Miranda:—"Yeh, Charley, you'd better git home, and tomorra I'se guine rat over 'n tell yore maw whut **her** boy has done 'n come to. As fer you, Obscene, you sit rat dare in dat chair 'n don't move. I'll tend to **you** later."

Charley runs out.

Scene III:—A knock at the door.

Miranda (packing her freshly ironed clothes in a basket):—"Go'n see who dat at de door, Obscene. But mind you come rat back hyar and set down. I'll not hab you gittin' in any more mischief. (To herself) I'll declare, I'll nebber git through wid Mis' Joneses' clothes at dis rate."

(Obscene gets up slowly and goes off stage. In a minute he comes running back).

Obscene (in a stage whisper):—"Hit's de pahson! Kin I bring him back hyar?"

Miranda:—"You go back 'n talk to him f'er a minit, den bring him

back hyar. I'se got to change ma dress."

(Obscene goes out. Miranda hurriedly rummages through the clothes basket, all the time mumbling angrily to herself).

Miranda:—"Of all times fer de preacher to cum. I gits enuff uv seeing him at de church, widout him coming to see **me**."

(She picks out a print dress, then dashes into another room to change. Obscene and the Parson enter).

Obscene:—"Set down. Maw'll be hyar in a minit."

(Silence. Obscene looks at his feet, while Parson Johnson looks around at the kitchen, occasionally nodding, or shaking his head. Miranda enters tying her belt).

Parson:—"Well, well, and how

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

(With apologies to Wordsworth)

*She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon his sight;
A lovely figure, tall and slim
In dazzling gown his eyes did dim;
So brightly did she seem to shine,
He thought that he'd had too much
wine;
Her hair—a fascinating gold
Tight curls of beauty parlors told;
And she had caught him unaware,
Determined to his heart insnare.*

*He watched her as she glided near;
She murmured low, "Oh, hello, dear."
She rolled her large, expressive eyes;
The lashes drooped with paint and
dyes.*

*Succumbing to her baleful charms,
He gathered her into his arms.
He fell—his heart was at her feet,
So innocent of foul deceit.
She smiled—that deadly treacherous
smile,
The helpless victim to beguile.*

*He thought, "An angel from above,"
And to her he poured out his love.
Nor did he know 'twas just a joke,
Until she left him sad and broke.
His frat pin, symbol of perfection,
Is only one of her collection.*

*Oh, love so cruel, how could you dote
On making this poor fool the goat?
She was a phantom of delight,
But oh, the price of that one night!*

Anna Mary Shields.

does you do dis beautiful day, sis-tah Miranda? Dat is a mighty purty dress you has on."

Miranda (Fixing her hair and straightening her dress):—"Ef I had knowed it war you, Parson, I would hab straightened up a bit. But I jist got through wid ma ironing, 'n you knows whut a job dat are."

Obscene:—"Maw, ain't dot Mis Joneses' d - - - ?"

Miranda:—"Shut up!" What wuz you fixin' to say, Parson?"

Parson:—"I wuz a fixin' to say dat now you kin say as de Good Lawd Jesus sed, 'I has glorified de on de earth, I hab finished de work dat you gavest me to do.' But de real mission uv ma visit wuz to find out ef you wuz coming to de all day sing, come fust Sunday?"

Obscene (eagerly):—"Maw, Maw, kin I go? You knows I'se got to git fo'gived 'cause I - - - ."

Miranda:—"Yes, yes, you kin go, but **be quiet**. (sweetly) Yes, Parson, I'll be dare, 'n I'll try to hab on a still mo' beautiful dress when I sings in de choir. You know I'se fust soprano in de quartet, too."

Parson:—"Yes, Sistah Miranda, youse is a fine, honest woman, and a superb addition to any church. You knows us church folks has a pow'ful hard time combating de sins, 'specially uv lieing and stealing; and I'se proud 'cause you is helpin' to overcum dese evils in our community. You has done some mighty fine wuk sistah, some mighty fine wuk."

Miranda:—"I has only been tryin' to do ma Christian duty in squishing dese sins, Brother Johnson."

Parson:—"Well, I'se glad dat we kin count on yo' service. I got to go now 'n see de othah members uv our magnificent church. Good evening."

(He lifts hs top hat to Miranda, and marches out with a conquering air).

Miranda:—"Now Obscene, you has sinned pow'fully bad, and I'se shamed uv de way you acted 'fore de Parson. So you has got to git fo'gived and saved. Now repeat de commandment 'Thou shall not steal' fifty times. Go on; start now."

Obscene:—"Thy shall not steal." Thy shan't steal, - - - - ."

Curtain.

WESLEYAN

The Oldest and Best

ALICE COOK



WE ARE chiefly concerned with Wesleyan as it is today—the “Oldest” according to history and the “Best” according to our own judgment, yet it is inspirational now that she has reached her 100th year to think about the Wesleyan of the past.

The brilliant beginning of the institution shows such an unusual thing as the granting of a charter to a woman's college calling forth much discussion. One of the leaders who advocated the legislative act to grant the charter was that famous Georgian, Alexander H. Stephens, then a young legislator. Later in referring to the matter he spoke of it in the following picturesque manner:

“Then there was but one college in the state, and that for the education of men. Now we have five times that number of the same character. Then there was not in the state, nor in the world, I believe, a single chartered university for the education and regular graduation of women; I mean such as conferred the usual college degrees. The Georgia Female College, At Macon, (Wesleyan), incorporated in 1836 with such objects, purposes and powers, I believe, was the first of its kind anywhere.”

“The movement at the time,” he continued, “was the occasion of amusement to some. The experiment prov-

ing successful beyond the expectations of its most sanguine friends; the example became contagious—not only in our own state, but in adjoining states—and we now have a perfect galaxy of those brilliant luminaries.”

Mr. Stephens expressed his belief that of all of the achievements of the state of Georgia that this should “still be at the top, the filling and crowning point of her glory, that she took the lead of all the world in woman's education.”

The influence of the college is not limited to Georgia, but has spread throughout the world sending out graduates who have well affirmed her title “the best.” The lives of her many graduates speak for themselves.

Polished by a life of 100 years—a century of enthusiastic leaders and students—the modern Wesleyan embodies all that a heritage of literary and social culture could include.

The passer-by would probably wonder at the term “Oldest” in connection with the present Wesleyan which is established in the newest and most modern plant of its kind in the state. None of the age, however, has been lost in it. It has merely been metamorphosed into a new and beautiful home which contains all of the glory of its past and the spirit and hope of its present and future!

Busy-Ness

SUSAN MAGETTE

“No where so busy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he seemed bisier than he was.”

Although Chaucer was describing the king's lawyer in the “Canterbury Tales”, he might have been speaking of any number of people in the world today.

This might be the friend who, regardless of what he is doing, will invariably answer:

“I'm sorry, but I'm too busy to do that now.”

Or it might be the relative who never has anything to show for it but says every night:

“I've been so busy all day long that I'm completely worn out.”

It could be the customer who after having been shown practically everything in the department says:

“No, thank you, I haven't time to decide now, I'm

just looking today anyway.”

Or it could even be the acquaintance who is always going to write a book. Although the book never appears, he always says to a visitor:

“Please have a seat and wait just a minute. I'm very busy now. I must look up this reference. I've been terribly busy the past month.”

Few of these will admit that they are “busy” to avoid being really busy, but the “busy-ness” of most of them is expressed in a quotation from Stephen Leacock in the February “Readers Digest.” When Mr. Leacock receives a wire asking him to speak on a program, he always answers:

“Crushed with work. Impossible get away.” “And then he strolls back into the reading room of the club and falls asleep again.”

How Do You Talk?

DORTHY LUNSFORD



HEY didn't laugh when Madame Modjeska, the famous tragedienne, recited the numbers one to 250 in Polish. Instead they cried, so beautiful was the tone and diction of that language. It little mattered that Modjeska, after discussing the loveliness of her language, could not remember any of the ballads she knew. Her audience was still obviously moved even after she had confessed her deception.

"One, two, three. . . ."

Do such syllables, lazily spoken, bring visions of flowing rivers and green meadows to your strained eyes?

"Four, five six. . . ."

Or sharply said, do they bring visions of the stock-market page and the next installment on the radio to your tired mind?

"Seven, eight, nine. . . ."

Or do these syllables remind you that the speech of our day, in the home, on the street, and in the schools pursues the limping tenor of its way with many varied sounds and intonations, that we torture one poor word a thousand ways to earn the distinction of being described a "stuttering, slovenly-spoken generation," given to paying too much attention to accent and too little to distinct enunciation?

The fact that we are Americans with democratic enmity to all authority and impatient of rule and restraint can unfortunately not be helped. This sense of democracy forces us into accepting and using many mistakes of which we may be conscious, yet of which we make no effort to correct as we have an eternal fear of being called "highbrow."

Then the devotion of each sectional division to its own dialect is clearly not a way to successful enunciation. The Southern drawl, the Western twang, and the

Northern sharpness are all cherished as a banner of sectional loyalty. If only the Southerner could acquire a Northern "r" to his famed "Good mowin', suh"; the Westerner a little of the drawl to his "wild mustang", nasally pronounced; and the Northerner a little softness and a "g" or so—well, that would provide a standard American language.

The faults of our diction, however, do not all belong to a particular part of the country. All of us are guilty of leaving off that final "g", omitting the "d" in the middle of a word, using "i" for "e", adding or omitting an "r". For example, only the best of you would not say: "Thank yer fo' yo' kin'ness, Emmer, en singin' fo' us."

Not only do we tend to omit letters and use others needlessly, but we break down most vowel sounds, and in doing this, produce a slurring similar to the French liason. Only from meaning could one guess that "attaboy" has been conveniently, but not grammatically, reduced from "That's a boy". That is a result of American love of slang and new words. Not many would recognize "ware-zee" as pronunciation of actual words, yet this is the way we murder "Where is he?" Try it! Have you ever heard the "t" in America's motto, "Le's go"? Or the "p" in our favorite desert, "pum'kin pie"?

Of course the guilty person never feels his guilt, therefore a conscious effort is never made for improvement until the fault is pointed out. The sentences below are written as the average American speaks, Test yourself, and remember, you are probably one of the guilty!

We mus' n' b'lieve all th't's said.

Wen y' go t' gi' ch' hat, please bring m' mine.

Keep on writtin' t'll y' c'n do't right.

Wesleyan Centennial Commencement Issue

The next number of The Wesleyan will be a double issue in honor of the Wesleyan Centennial. An anthology of Wesleyan poetry compiled by the scribes will be the main feature of this unusual number.

If you have a favorite poem written by an alumna of Wesleyan that you think should be included among these selections, give it to Amy Cleckler or Alice Hinson. A five dollar prize will be awarded to the writer of the best editorial, poem, short story, or play based on Wesleyan today or its history.

Signs of Spring

TIM TILLMAN

SPRING is here! No one knows just how or when it came but it is impossible to deny the fact that it has arrived. Those roses in the parkways up town look as though they are contemplating putting out their first leaf. They remain as brown and dry as ever but they have an expectant look.

How is it that one day winter is in full possession and the next day, with no appreciable change in temperature to blame it on, spring is

in the air? After running down the sources of the spring atmosphere, it has been decided that maybe the ad-writers could be hailed as the harbingers of spring.

Did you notice one cold rainy day about two weeks ago an inconspicuous ad announcing a sale of straw hats? Here we have Mr. Ad Writer's most subtle announcement that winter has lost its grip and with that small paragraph was vanquished. Who, on reading that, did not look up last summer's chapeau and find-

ing it sadly battered from that last trip, to the beach, did not feel the immediate necessity of rushing down town and replacing it before being caught hatless? The old felt in that moment is relegated to the moth balls for another rest.

Friend Ad Writer's genius didn't stop with hats! He cunningly devised, "Special today only on rakes, hoes, and lawn mowers. Going fast. Come early to avoid the rush." A large percentage of those who were left cold by the hat question resented the insinuation that they were not the first to recognize the arrival of spring, that someone had started gardening before them and started feverishly searching the frozen ground for a live blade of grass or that first daring dandelion. On finding one in a sunny corner, they joined the ranks by rushing townward, minus overcoat, to fight other optimistic gardeners for the possession of aforesaid rakes which will be carefully forgotten in a few days.

On through the pages of the newspaper it runs. Everything from spring tonic to flower seeds shout the season in each column. Spring in your heart for a dollar a bottle or ten cents a package, or better yet, free for the mere reading.

Some people affirm that they can smell spring. There is something almost tangible in the atmosphere which in spite of the cold and dampness reminiscent of a December day, can make itself felt and can put the old spring fever in the blood. The air seems to stir with growth and to be laden with the perfume of flowers which have not yet been planted. We feel an awakening not so much in the outside world as in our senses and in our appreciation of the renewal of life.

Spring is the old, old story of optimism. We rush spring and why not? We make it in our hearts and it reflects on the world outside giving it a rosy glow, long before the



robin dares risk pneumonia on our seared lawns and dead flower beds. We turn our backs on cold and hardship and deny their existence. Before us things are going to be more pleasant. Our troubles are going to lighten almost any day now. Nothing can go wrong when that sun begins to warm the cockles of our hearts and thaw out the worries that we have stored up with our winter supply of pickled peaches.

Spring means another chance. Even the hobos and the little boys selling flowers along the streets step lighter and seem to have the cocky assurance that their luck is changing and just around the next corner they're going to strike it rich. It's the old "hope that springs eternal in the human breast" which after all is what we need for success anyway.

The indications of spring are all here, but when does the season itself really arrive? Watch closely and you'll see a never failing sign. The day the theatre manager takes down his "steam heat on the inside" and puts up "cooling system guaranteed," take it from us, winter is gone and spring has definitely arrived.

COVETOUSNESS

*An impudent shred of
A moon
Rides high
Arrogantly clad in mist.
Rakishly is slung from
One silver ear-tip
A glowing pendant star.*

*Within I feel
If I could snatch her jewel
And Brazenly swing it
In lopsided elegance,
My spirit would be touched with fire.
I, too, might have
Eager eyes*

Adoring me.

Helen Jones.

*Outside the dawn is breaking
The night last leave is taking
And dark earth grows red
When honest folks in waking
Face work their sleep forsaking
It's swell to be in bed.*



Sonnet

*The Sunday stillness reigns in forest aisles
Where lofty trees their heavy heads hang down
In adoration mute. Their leafy files
With wild cascades of rippling song resound.
The birds pour forth their anthems on the air,
Their alleluia gay with music drips.
The clouds float by, their vestments heav'nly fair,
With feath'ry fingers held against their lips.
The flower children wilt, tired out before
The sun's fierce threats of doom and text fire-red
Until to heav'n's high altar they implore
That rain pour down its blessing o'er their head.
—Its tapping fingers in my heart, again
Pluck at its chords and sound a soft amen.*

Tim Tillman.

Gardenias for Dotsy

AMY CLECKLER

Characters:

Dotsy—aged 15, a lank, yet beautiful brunette with wide eyes that look as if she's always just been surprised, and with growing ambitions to be a "lady" like her sister, Gwendolyn.

Benjy—aged 17, awkward, raw-boned, still in the pimply stage—but with evident possibilities of becoming a "smooth guy."

Gwendolyn—a sophisticate with a golden plaited halo above her high smooth forehead. Dark, wide eyes. The type of girl who never lets any man forget even temporarily that she is a woman.

Marcus Morris—a too good-looking (and too romantic) suitor to Gwendolyn. Local talent that would go well on the Hollywood screen.

Bill Howard—in love with Gwendolyn. A regular fellow, but hardly courting material for her. Everything about him—except the twinkle in his medium-blue eyes—is mediocre. His hair is neither sleek nor curly—the kind which is no color at all.

Mrs. Dozier—mother to Dotsy and Gwendolyn. An active member in all the civic clubs, the garden clubs, the P.-T. A., A. A. U. W., D. A. R., U. D. C., etc. (not to mention the bridge clubs). A very efficient twentieth-century mother who manages her daughters, her husband, her servants, and her home according to the latest methods, and has time to reduce scientifically and "club" on the side.

Mr. Dozier—a subdued, bald-headed, bay-windowed individual who invariably wears the wrong colored tie, who hates golf, and who has a passion for throwing horse-shoes and for his younger daughter, Dotsy.

Bassie—a caramel-brown Negress who has been with the Dozier family long enough to "belong". She is personal maid to the girls and confidante to Dotsy.

Stage Directions:

The side terrace of the Doziers' rather pretentious white-washed brick home. At the center back there is a chromium and black-enameled glider, with shining white leather upholstery and crimson pillows, sitting against a broad window through which there is a glimpse of Venetian blinds and gold draperies. To the right is a corresponding chromium lounging chair with side table, ash trays, and an assortment of *Esquires* and *New Yorkers*. A red leather chair stands further right, close to the edge of the terrace which is bordered with squat white boxes of low evergreens. At the back, to the extreme left, are double glass doors leading out from the living room. On either side are immense black urns, etched severely against the snowy background.

Scene I—(Terrace. 10 A. M. Dotsy, wearing a bobtailed skimpy dress, is sprawled out, stomach-down on the glider, her long slim legs swinging in the air. She is immersed in movie magazines. On the floor by her side is a box of chocolate covered peppermints. Bassie appears).

Bassie: Lawd, Miss Dotsy, you done got another box uv dem pep'mints. Gimme one, please maa'm. Yo' Bassie hab sho' got a sweet tooth dis mawin', chile.

Dotsy: (from the depth of her magazine) Sure thing, Bassie. (Suddenly becoming aware of the situation) Oh, jus' a minute. Now see here, Bassie. I'll give you of the whole box of—

Bassie: (beaming) De whole box!

Dotsy: Yeah, sure—if you'll do sumpin' for me.

Bassie: You knows, Miss Dotsy, dat I allus does things fer you 'n Miss Gwen. But don't go a-askin' me ter do sumpin' yo' Maw would git me fer. De las' time—

Dotsy: Oh don't be a drag. It's only my second day home after that horrid boarding school—ughhhhh! — and already you're being mean to me.

Bassie: (eying the peppermints covetously) Aw right, now, Miss Dot. What's I ter do?

Dotsy: Well—the Junior Debs' dance comes off tonight at ten o'clock, and—

Bassie: (muttering) I can't do nuthin' 'bout dat.

Dotsy: Goose! Mother and Gwen went shopping for me yesterday, and you should see, you should jus' see the new dress they expect me to wear. Why, they'll be buyin' me a rattler soon!

Bassie: You mean dat gorgeous softy blue 'n pank un I seen—

Dotsy: (shrieking at Bassie) Don't you dare call that horrible, horrible babyish net thing pretty! It's too ridic'lous to expect a girl home from boarding school to look like she's going to a kindergarten party at the first dance of the holidays. And Bassie (ever so confidentially) just think. *He* might be there, *He* might see me in the new dress, *He*.

Bassie: (soothingly) Now chile don't go a-gettin' all upstot. Who you mean mought be thar?

Dotsy: Oh Bassie, it's so frightening, so-er-dev'stating, this being in love!

Bassie: (with dismay) In love?

Dotsy: Oh yes indeed. Ever and ever so much. (Assuming tragic attitude) Desperately. Hopelessly.—(Glancing at "Movie Romance" she has been reading) "My heart leapt as I saw him standing there, bare-headed, the wind caressing his soft black curls. My fate was certain. He was to be the one love in my life."

Bassie: There, there, honey. He gwin' ter be lookin' at you so hard, Mr. Benjy won't even see—

Dotsy: Benjy! (wild eyed) Who mentioned Benjy? That baby! You didn't think, oh Bassie, you couldn't have thought—

Bassie: Well, ain' you goin' to de dance wid Mr. Benjy?

Dotsy: (calmer) Of course I *do* have to go with him. But—that's jus' a way of getting there. The other is different—oh very different.

Bassie: (still viewing the peppermints hungrily) What I s'pose to do 'bout hit?

Dotsy: I tried on Gwen's new black moire yesterday. It's a peach. I look ab-solu'ly—what *is* the word?—"alluring" in it. Like Norma Shearer, or someone perf'ly marv'lous.

Bassie: Sho'ly you ain'—

Dotsy: That's jus' what I am. You're to get it and press it—for the pep'mints. (Voices and footsteps heard inside) I'll give 'em to you soon's Mother and Gwen leave. Run on, Bassie. (Falls back into old position on glider. The door opens. Mrs. Dozier, arrayed in furs and diamonds, accompanied by Gwendolyn, beautiful in a black frock with an infinity of white frills and a black, shovel-brimed hat which completely obscures one dark eye, enters).

Gwendolyn: (casually) H'lo, sis.—Do look, Mother, chocolates again! and between meals at that. Now Dotsy, you know very well at that rate your complexion—

Mrs. Dozier: Yes indeed, child. And such an unladylike posture! Hasn't Miss Harrington taught you yet how to be a lady? Her school is most highly recommended for that purpose. Such a big girl, too. Practically grown. I'm sure your sister, Gwendolyn—

Dotsy: Please, Mother, could I go

along and be dropped out at the beauty shop on your way to—er—which of the alphabet clubs is it this morning?

Mrs. Dozier: Stop being disrespectful, child. I'm sure you should be proud to be connected with the U. D. C., D. A. R. and—Gracious, what could *you* want at the beauty shop. A mere baby. Goodness, you're not going to start—

Gwendolyn: Certainly not.

Dotsy: (persuasively) But Mother please. It's the first dance, and I do so want my hair done—waved straight back, you know.

Mrs. Dozier: Preposterous! No indeed. Get Bessie to curl it on the irons for you. It will look so sweet and girlish with the lovely new dress Mother has provided for her little daughter.

Dotsy: (under her breath) You said only a second ago that I was practically grown.

Mrs. Dozier: What's that? Don't mutter, child. It isn't nice. And do wipe that smudge of chocolate off your face. (Spying the titles of Dotsy's magazines) Horrors! Where do you get your taste in reading? Such trash. No, Dorothy, for my sake don't make your father late to our dinner engagement by pitching horseshoes with him too long this afternoon. Why you two should like that vulgar game so well—and with the golf course right across the way! (Glancing at watch) Come, Gwendolyn, you'll be late at the dressmaker's, dear. (Mrs. Dozier sweeps Gwendolyn off the stage in a cloud of motherly adoration.)

Dotsy: (expressively) Ughhhhhh! (She turns back to her reading. Benjy, whistling, ambles up attempting nonchalance.)

Benjy: Be by for ya about eight, kid. (Executing a perfect blush) Er—what color dress ya wearin', baby? Flowers, ya know.

Dotsy: (becoming interested and suddenly assuming a very grownup and Gwendolyn-like attitude) Oh real—ly, you *shouldn't*. (Flicking her long black lashes slowly up and down.)

Benjy: (earnestly) Oh sure, Dotsy. I been savin' from my 'lowance for weeks. You gotta have th' prettiest co'sage of all—for the prettiest girl, you know. (Finishes lamely. His aggressive ears are fiery red.)

Dotsy: So sweet of you. Well, if you really want I should tell you, I'd like gardenias, please. (Benjy gulps audibly) Well, s'long. See you later, Benjy.

Benjy: 'Bye, kid.

(Dotsy smiles at him ecstatically, and as he turns and shuffles self-consciously away she sticks out her small red tongue at him and wrinkles up her nose with distaste. Then she assumes a smug, satis-

fied expression, picks up the box of peppermints, and starts for the front door.)

Dotsy: (Yelling) Bessie!

Curtain.

Scene II—(The same terrace. 5:30 P. M. Gwendolyn in a traily, beruffled soft blue chiffon tea dress, her immense blue hat thrown carelessly on a chair, sits on the glider by Bill Howard, the ever constant. Dotsy, peering through the window behind them, shows a head with a fresh beauty-parlor wave, the pompadour kind. Her eyes are wider open than ever as she absorbs her accomplished sister's technique.)

Gwendolyn: Now Billy—please don't. Not again! I don't think I could bear being proposed to again today.—It's been frightfully hot, hasn't it? (She offers him a cigarette from a sterling case.)

Bill: Thanks. Say-y-y-y, Gwen, will you always be like this?

Gwendolyn: I'm sure (she looks about absently) I couldn't tell you. Will you?

(Mr. Dozier, coat on arm, blue collar open, green tie hanging limply, comes timidly up at left mopping his forehead.)

Mr. Dozier: (apologetically) How's the young folks? (Gwendolyn glances rather contemptuously over his shoulder.)

Bill: Fine, sir.

Mr. Dozier: Seen my little girl? A fine afternoon for horseshoes. Sure seems good for the baby to be home from school. Like to join us? I always say—

Gwendolyn: No, father, we haven't seen Dotsy. She's probably off day-dreaming at some movie star. Such a queer child—(Dotsy winces out of sight.)

Bill: Good afternoon sir. (as Mr. Dozier enters the house, letting the door slam behind him.)

Mr. Dozier: (calling) Dotty-y!

Gwendolyn: Mother and I simply can't do a thing with him. It's disgusting.

Bill: Now see here, sweetheart, you're unjust. Never a finer fellow. I *like* your father and—say it's wonderful! Imagine being able to start at the bottom as he did—a shipping clerk—and now the owner of a string of factories all over the United States. Imagine—

Gwendolyn: (flushing painfully) That is beside the point. I'm sure I'm completely uninterested in your opinion of Father. (She arranges herself more desirably on the glider, suddenly all attention as she notices a dark figure strolling up with easy nonchalance.) Ohhhhhh! Marcus. How perfectly delightful of you to drop in. (Pulling him down on the seat beside her.

Letting her hand flutter on his lapel a second) Bill was just saying he must be along and (beaming angelically at Marcus) I was so *a-fraid* I might be lonesome. It'll be all right now, Bill. Marcus won't let Gwendolyn get lonesome, will you dear?

Marcus: How could anyone of their own accord let such a lovely one have even a moment alone. (He is gazing with a dying-calf expression into her eyes. Bill grunts disgustedly, and Marcus snaps back to reality) Oh, I beg your pardon—er—Bill.

Bill: (frigidly) Not at all. Gwendolyn I will call for you in time to make the dinner at seven-thirty. Good afternoon. (shaking hands with Marcus.) Don't get *too* lonesome, you two. (He mutters as he leaves hastily. Dotsy's head reappears in the window.)

Marcus: Perfect fool, Bill. Never could understand why you let him hang around.

Gwendolyn: (defensively) You just don't know him. He's not a bad sort. Really. But let's not discuss him anyway. (She leans back temptingly.) Tell me something, dearest.

Marcus: O my dear, I love you, yes, yes. Utterly, Completely.

Gwendolyn: Enough to do something for me?

Marcus: Name it, most lovely one. You're a picture there, my dear—a lovely portrait of a girl—young, fresh, unspoiled—too beautiful to be a reality. (Dotsy gasps.)

Gwendolyn: You say the most wonderful, the most *glorious* things. What I want you to do for me may sound a bit unreasonable—but I've thought it over, and it's the only thing to do. An old classmate of mine, rather plain little dark-haired thing, is coming over to the club dance tonight. Plans to spend the night with me—

Marcus: Surely you don't expect me to give you up to that dull Bill of yours and tow the girl-friend to the dance—

Gwendolyn: Nope, here's the point. Her date, that impossible Nick Jones, can't get here till time for the dance—and since I've a dinner engagement there's no one to entertain her until ten o'clock.

Marcus: Of course I'll be glad to, my love. (Glancing at watch) Well, I'll be off. Be ready when I come for you at ten. And in the meantime I'll entertain the guest for you, angel. (He kisses her hand.)

(Dotsy, who has been watching enviously, nearly swoons at this romantic farewell.)

Curtain.

Scene III—The terrace. 8:00 P. M.

(A metamorphosis has occurred. Dotsy is transformed from a lanky school girl to a beautiful young woman gowned in Gwendolyn's black frock—a flattering, clinging bit of dress “sans shoulders, sans back—sans almost everything.” She strolls out on the porch, a lighted cigarette in her hand, her bare young flesh glittering in the half dark. Bassie follows.)

Bassie: Now Miss Dotsy, you sho' you ain' in trouble, honey? Lawd, is you ever scrumptious looking? Miss Gwen, her ownself, ain' eber look mo' ticin'. An' them white flowers—

Dotsy: Gardenias.

Bassie: Yes'm! Lawd a mussy! What you gonna do if Mr. Benjy come up fo' you leave wid Mr. Marcus? How you know Mr. Marcus ain' gonna recognize you? An' what if Miss Gwen's visitor show up fo' you kin tow 'im off?

Dotsy: (Shrugging her shoulders) Do go away and leave me alone, Bassie (impulsively) Oh Bassie, you're a dear to help me. Don't worry 'bout things. See, I called Benjy 'n' tol' him not to drop by 'til ten—that I'd be busy. As for recognizing me—well, that's not likely, not with my having been off to school all the year, and with the transformation. (She giggles and pats the jet black waves and smoothes the dress over the slimmness of her young body.) You say yourself that you'd hardly know me. Besides, (sadly) he's never really looked at me. As for the visitor. Well,—she'll not be here.

Bassie: Land o' Goshen! What you done done to de—

Dotsy: Jus' wired that Mother's sick. Now, do cheer up, Bassie. You look as sad as a dish of okra—cold okra. Ughhh! Be a love and run along!

Bassie: Oh Lawdy, Miss Dotsy, I sho' prays nothin' bad ain' gonna happen. You, a-tryin' to hook yo' sisters beau-feller, you—(Bassie enters the house, moaning and groaning to herself. Dotsy arranges herself as languorously as possible among the crimson pillows, and waits. Presently a car is heard pulling up at the curb. Dotsy looks about wildly as if seeking a place of escape. Then she recovers her poise and resumes her pose. Marcus, handsome in evening clothes, strolls in, starts for the door in the circle of light that falls from the electric lantern. Dotsy remains seated.)

Dotsy: I beg your *par-don*. Could you be Marcus Morris?

Marcus: (startled) Indeed—And you—you are Gwendolyn's visitor. How de-

lightful of you to be waiting here, ready.

Dotsy: (patting pillows into place for him) *Do* be seated. You're quite right. I'm Angela.

Marcus: (gazing as if hypnotized) Why, how well named you are! Gwendolyn neglected to tell me what a beautiful guest she was having. Funny how one beautiful woman will rarely admit that another has charm equal—or *surpassing*—

Dotsy: *Real-ly*, Mr. Morris.

Marcus: Marcus, please.

Dotsy: (tenderly) Marcus! But *honestly* you shouldn't say such things to me—because after all you're in love with Gwendolyn—(Curtain falls to represent the passing of an hour. Rises on same scene.)

Marcus: She's an amusing little girl—and seems to like *me* quite well—

Dotsy: (stiffening perceptibly) She told me you were charming. But I feel sure she didn't mean for you to be *this* charming.

Marcus: Oh bother Gwen! How did it happen, most lovely one—

Dotsy: (Winces) Not that name, please.

Marcus: May I ask why—

Dotsy: Only recently, today to be quite truthful, someone said that—sincerely I thought—and since I have learned that—

Marcus: My poor little angel! How could they help being sincere? I've been sitting here looking at you, Angela. You're a picture there my dear—a lovely portrait of a girl—young, fresh, unspoiled—too beautiful to be a reality. Or a poem a wonderful poem, all softness and melody, and—gardenias—That's what you're like—a fragile, fragrant gardenia.

Dotsy: (Screaming) You horrid, horrid boy! You're the biggest, baddest two-timer that ever was! *Only* this afternoon you were telling Gwendolyn the same, the very same—

Marcus: Frightened, (blankly) Angela?—

Dotsy: (incoherently) No, I'm *not* Angela and I'm *not* lovely—not a—what you call 'em—gardenia. (Bill and Gwendolyn have come up and stand staring at them unobserved.) I'm Gwen's little sister home for vacation and you're the horrid, horrid boy that shoots the same line to every girl—(finishes weakly) and I thought you were like—Clark Gable. (Convulsed in silent sobs.)

(Gwendolyn steps up as if she has not heard the conversation. Bill looks pain-

fully embarrassed. Marcus is red as a beet.)

Gwendolyn: What in the world is the matter with Gwen's little sis'? (She pats Dot's arm affectionately) Did the *Horrid* man frighten the little girl? Well, cheer up, sis', 'cause there's big news for you all. Shall we let them in on the secret?

Bill: (puzzled) Secret?

Gwendolyn: Well, of course, everyone has realized it for years but—well, Bill and I are to be married. (Bill looks as if he might swoon from delight and surprise.)

(Mrs. Dozier is coming in from her dinner party—meekly followed by Mr. Dozier. She catches the word—'Married'.)

Mrs. Dozier: Married? For goodness sakes. Well, well, well. Who's marrying who? And why didn't you tell me? *Who*, I demand to know? Don't stand there like dummies! (Turns and pounces on Mr. Dozier.) Will you tell me who?

Mr. Dozier: (nervously) I'm sure I don't know, pet.

Mrs. Dozier (giving him a “You wouldn't” look) Well—Dot—where *did* you get that dress—

Gwendolyn: I gave it to her, Mother. (Dot's eyes, wide with fear and delight, look adoringly at her sister) And of course it's Bill and I are to be married.

(Mr. Dozier pumps Bill's hand enthusiastically. Mrs. Dozier gushes and coos over him, kissing him on the forehead. Marcus, stupified, sees his chance to escape and slips out. Dotsy gazes at the scene, hypnotized—as Gwendolyn weeps on her mother's ample bosom.)

Gwendolyn: I've been so blind—so very blind not to know all the time it was Bill—

(A loud whistling of “A Little White Gardenia” is heard. Benjy, with a new haircut and tuxedo, lolls in.)

Benjy: Ready, Babe? Good evenin', folks.

All: Hello, Benjy—

(Gwendolyn puts her arm around Dotsy.)

Gwendolyn: Have a big time at the dance, dear. You look lovely—(low) really like gardenias.

Dotsy: (Bursting with pride and regarding Benjy with new approval and affection) Come on Benjy. We're gonna be late.

Benjy: Yeah. (awed voice) Gosh, you look swell, Dotsy.

(They rush off in a flutter of parental good-byes.)

Curtain.

Teas and Puns

BETTY AYCOCK

TEAS and puns—these arouse in me an almost irrepressible desire to make faces, utter ordinarily suppressed ejaculations, and throw things. In short, I dislike them intensely; I detest them extremely.

Take teas, for instance, those sticky affairs where you see a lot of people you don't particularly like, say a good many things you don't necessarily mean, and eat a lot of dainty nothings your digestion would be better off without. I wonder whether anybody really does enjoy them. They seem so useless. I have attended exactly two teas at which I met the guest of honor—at the others, no one seemed to know who he or she was.

When I accept an invitation to a tea, telling the hostess how delightful I'll be to come and how sweet I think she is to ask me, and when I leave her "informal little get-together," telling her what a lovely time I've had and how attractive I think her still unknown visitor, I tuck these deviations from the truth away under the head of polite fiction and hope the Recording Angel will understand.

As for puns, I used to like them. I mean really good ones, never those that are a strain on both my imagination and sense of humor. I believe my appreciation for this form of wit began to dwindle when Charles, one of our up-and-coming young men of the neighborhood, began shouting them at me everytime he and I

came in hailing distance of each other. "I know use, you wouldn't get the drift anyway," was pretty bad. When he told me our preacher, who had been sick in bed, had been lying continually for a week, it was even worse; and then came his postcard with the picture of a man lassoing a mountain peak and the words "Winchell taking a peek." What a continual dose of these can do to a good disposition!

Webster defines an abomination as "a cause of wickedness." Puns and teas haven't caused any wickedness on my part yet, unless you count the polite fiction and the time I threw that trash can at Charles; but I feel myself slipping. Something's got to be done!

See . . .

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The Magic of Marionettes

ARLINE TAYLOR



READ, "To fall in love with your job and get the most from it. . . . Get acquainted with it! Explore it!" Wouldn't that also apply to hobbies? I thought. Experimentally, I set out to learn a little of the history of marionettes, my hobby. The trial was highly successful, for I am more fascinated by them than ever.

Few people understand the difference between marionettes and puppets. True, they are both jointed dolls, operated by persons called "puppeteers." But a puppet is usually hollow and open at the bottom, so that it may be controlled by a hand in the inside. Marionettes are jointed dolls, worked from above by strings or from below by rods. The puppets are the oldest, but the marionettes are the most popular.

The first puppets were made by the Egyptian priests to add mystery to their ceremonies. Imagine the effect of a moving terra-cotta idol on a superstitious people. The Greek oracles made the same use of the puppet, usually life-size or larger. Kings came long distances to hear their words.

After the formation of the Catholic Church, marionettes gave miracle plays to teach the ignorant children. It was then that the name "marionette" originated. They were the "little Marys" of the nativity scenes. But the plays must have become too pleasurable, for in 1210 they were outlawed from the church and were forced to set up on the roadside. It was then that modern comedy developed, in accordance with the tastes of the country audiences.

Every country has its favorite character, the most popular in America being the little clown. He is so simple and gay that he touches the hearts of both young and old. In England Punch and Judy puppets, with Toby, the dog and the police-

man, are the favorites. Every French troupe has its Guignol, a marionette clown very similar to the American one.

Italy's marionettes are very different. Five feet high, weighing 104 pounds apiece, each marionette is controlled from above by means of two iron bars, one hooked to the head and the other to the right and sword arm. They fight and have many fierce battles, clad in their heavy tin armor.

In Japan, the puppet show is traditional. The *ningyo*, a life-size doll has three handlers. The chief works the head and right arm; the second takes care of the left arm, and the third has charge of the legs and feet. The play is always read by a minstrel while the puppets act it out in pantomime and another minstrel accompanies on a stringed instrument.

Czechoslovakia leads in the marionette world of today. The finest and most modern marionette theaters are in Prague and Pilsen. But even the poorest troupe has its Kasperek, a simple, egg-headed boy, the essence of puppetry in Czechoslovakia. He appears in every play, whether it is Shakespeare or the Passion Play.

Kasperek, Punch, the American clown, Guignol—all have a definite appeal to their audiences. Why? "They appeal to that atom of philosophy tucked away in the brain of each human being." But there must be more definite reasons. I think that the first is their extreme simplicity. Every word, every act is as simply as possible, understandable by all. Another main reason is the rhythm and color of the stage and the musical accompaniment. The absurdity of repetition is a third one. A marionette always does everything more than once; it is more impressive and much more amusing.

The puppet holds much more fascination for the maker than the audience. The puppeteer must use all his originality to find new materials and characters. He must experiment with designs and color. One of the greatest gains is the loss of self-consciousness because of his hidden position.

This value has only been realized recently. Since 1928, there has been an immense increase in troupes, books and all-round interest. Marionettes have been introduced into camps and grade schools. They are particularly well adapted to these uses—they are able to be easily stylized; they are easily made to be daintily beautiful or grotesquely ugly. They lend themselves excellently to caricature. Now troupes have been experimenting with modern designs and motifs, which are very likely to be successful for a time.

The precedence of the moving pictures over the legitimate stage and the marionette show has often been proved. Yet I believe that the first will die out long before the last two. As long as there is a spark of imagination and originality in the brains of human beings, there will be marionettes. After all, movies are mechanical; marionettes are magical.

A PRAYER FOR TEARS

*O, God, please let me cry!
Bring this throbbing, taut with aching,
Almost breaking
Heart, relief.*

*Oh, Lord, please let tears flow!
Just a few to ease the pain
And then again
Backward ebb.*

*I pray Thee, make me cry!
Send tears to soothe this searing burn!
Then to Thee I'll turn,
Grateful - - Scarred.*

—Alberta Trulock.

